

**Statement
Concerning
Royal Arch Masonry
in the
Province of Alberta**
Calgary, Alberta, January 31st, 1916

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TO ROYAL ARCH MASONS,
RESIDENT WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

Companions: —

I believe the time has arrived when a statement concerning the Grand Chapter of Alberta R.A.M. should be laid before the interested Companions and, in my humble way, will attempt to do so, giving such facts as I believe cannot be successfully controverted.

From best information obtainable, it has been estimated that at least ninety per cent, of the Royal Arch Masons resident within the Province of Alberta, who have not as yet declared their allegiance to the Grand Chapter of Alberta favor the Grand Chapter idea and, therefore, its formation, but owing to misunderstandings a number of companions have been induced to retain their allegiance to the Grand Chapter of Canada (in the Province of Ontario) while others have remained neutral and both these classes of Companions are influenced by the same very natural nervousness as to the final outcome and result of the controversy, caused by their lack of knowledge concerning Masonic law and custom in such cases, for it must be admitted that the average R.A.M. has never bothered looking up and posting himself on such matters, hence he falls an easy victim of timidity and it is to those Companions that I would especially address myself, because the war for independence now on, is their fight and it is not manly to allow oneself to be frightened or to sidestep the issue. It is quite true that in taking your stand on the side of Alberta, an inconvenience might be met (but not for long) in, that should you sojourn out of the Province, you would not be allowed to visit a Chapter, but the incommode really does not account to much when considered in the light of the small number, comparatively speaking, who go visiting and of that number, the very few who would have an opportunity of visiting a Chapter, even if they desired to do so. In any case the principal for which we are combatting Ontario is worth some sacrifice. Numerous of us have been declared suspended by the Grand Chapter of Canada but their decrees, so far as the Companions in this province are concerned, amount to naught, we are still living – and I appeal to you Companions to take the stand for Alberta and "right" as against Ontario and "might".

Now then, what is all this war and row about? It is simply this, that the Royal Arch Masons in Alberta organized the Grand Chapter of Alberta without the permission of the Grand Chapter of Canada and that constitutes **the heinous crime** for which a number have been suspended and all, publicly declared irregular, spurious and clandestine. (See the notice; which appeared in the public press of this city on the 14th inst.)

In the following I will endeavour to demonstrate that the Chapters participating in the organization of the Grand Chapter of Alberta, had a perfect right to do so, without the consent of the Grand Chapter of Canada. In presenting this matter to you it is necessary to go back a few years and commence with the organization of the Grand Chapter of Canada in order that a correct understanding of the whole situation may be had.

In the year 1857 there were seven Royal Arch Chapters located in the old province of Canada and three of the Chapters organized the Grand Chapter of Canada, and I would like you to bear in mind this fact, that the Grand Chapter of Canada was organized in and for the old province of Canada and also that it was organized by a minority of the Chapters then in existence in that territory, and further that it did not

have the sanction or consent of a Grand Chapter in doing so. (They would now deny us the rights exercised and enjoyed by their forefathers.)

In 1867 the Dominion of Canada came into being and was made up of the British Province of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada, the latter at that time was divided into two provinces that portion of it which had been known as Upper Canada became the Province of Ontario, and the portion which had been known as Lower Canada was converted into the Province of Quebec, and had the Masons, both Blue and Royal Arch, of Old Canada had that consideration, which is expected to exist among Masons, for the other jurisdictions located in the Dominion of Canada, they would have changed their name to Ontario; for the name Canada, as used since 1867 by the Masons in the Province of Ontario, is a misnomer, for the Grand Lodge of Canada or the Grand Chapter of Canada do not now and never did hold jurisdiction over the Dominion of Canada.

In 1869 the government of the Dominion of Canada took over from the British Crown and the Hudson's Bay Company the territory known as Prince Ruperts Land or the North. West Territory, and -the present Province of Alberta formed part of that territory

In the year 1893 the Royal Arch Masons residing in Calgary Alberta and vicinity, decided to organize a Royal Arch Chapter, and could have, if they so desired, applied to the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia, or the Grand Chapter of England or the Grand Chapter of Scotland for dispensation and would, no doubt, have received same. But they for convenience, and that only, applied to the Grand Chapter of Canada for dispensation. Had they dreamed that their doing so would have led the Grand Chapter of Canada to set up a claim of exclusive jurisdiction over this territory, it is pretty safe betting that the application never would have gone to that Grand Body. However dispensation was applied for and granted and that was the commencement of Royal Arch Masonry in the territory now known as the Province of Alberta.

In 1909 or thereabouts, the question of organizing a Grand Chapter for Alberta was first brought forward and the Grand Scribe E of the Grand Chapter of Canada was advised of the movement that was on foot, the movement at that time did not come to anything because there were only a few chapters located in the Province and, while some were in favor of the idea, it was the prevailing opinion that the time was not ripe. However, the question was not lost sight of and there was more or less talk until April, 1913, when a convention or rather a gathering of Royal Arch Masons was held in Calgary at which a resolution was passed setting forth that in the opinion of those present at the meeting, the best interests of capitular Masonry would be furthered by the formation of a Grand Chapter for the Province of Alberta.

The next meeting was held on May 20th, 1913, at which there were seven Chapters represented, but the formation of a Grand Chapter was not proceeded with at this meeting because some of the representatives of the different Chapters did not fall in with the idea and those in favor of it did not wish to proceed without the participation of the majority of the Chapters located in the Province, a copy of the notice calling the meeting was sent to the Grand First Principal and the Grand Scribe E of Canada as well as to all concerned in this Province. Also note the difference between this action and that of those who organized the Grand Chapter of Canada. (A minority).

The next convention was held on May 29th, 1914, and this convention was called by a circular dated April 3rd, 1914, and signed by the first Principals of eight Chapters, a copy of this circular was sent to all Chapters and to all Past First Principals located in the Province, also to the Grand First Principal and Grand Scribe E, Grand Chapter of Canada; and it was at this convention that the Grand Chapter of Alberta was brought forth. And I here wish to state that the calling of the meetings and the meetings themselves, in every instance, were open and above board, there was absolutely nothing underhand in the whole proceedings, the statement of the Grand First Principal of the Grand Chapter of Canada to the contrary notwithstanding.

If you will refer to the proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Canada for the year 1914, you will find that the Grand First Principal in his address, admits full knowledge of the agitation that was going on in the Province of Alberta for the formation of a Grand Chapter, and you will further notice that he there boasts that the Grand Chapter of Canada has the largest jurisdiction in the world. Now then, Companions, do you not think that the head of the largest jurisdiction in the world of an organization standing for principles such as R.A.M. would have had sufficient interest in the welfare of the institution as to have

caused him to visit the dissatisfied district and attempt to pour oil on the troubled waters. But no action of this kind was taken, he preferred to rely on and accept misleading information from a disgruntled individual who was either afraid or ashamed to have his name appear at the bottom thereof, hence his (the Grand First Principal) address to the Grand Chapter contains a stack of erroneous information.

However immediately the Grand Chapter of Alberta was organized the head of the Grand Chapter of Canada got busy, suspended all Royal Arch Masons having anything to do with it and gave full particulars to the public press. Was that a Masonic act and in keeping with the teachings of the Arch, or in fact with any Masonry? No, I think not, but it is in full accord with the actions of the Masons of the Province of Ontario. On the occasion of the organization of the Grand Lodge for the Province of Quebec, the Masonic world knows of the frantic efforts put forth by the Masons of Ontario to prevent foreign jurisdictions recognizing the new Grand Lodge, and they kept the fight up for about five years when they were at last forced to surrender and acknowledge that the Masons of Quebec were perfectly justified and right in the stand they had taken, (but not until they had done such damage to the harmony of the craft in those two provinces that it is doubtful if they have yet fully recovered from it). And the Royal Arch Masons in Alberta are in exactly the same position today as were the Masons of Quebec in 1869, that is, they had the right to organize a Grand Chapter for their Province without the consent or sanction of any Grand Chapter ;and in exercising their right they have only carried out Masonic law and precedent, and my authority for that statement is Ill. Bro. the late Albert G. McKay who is, I believe, the best known and most generally recognized American authority, also the Grand Chapter of Canada itself. If you will turn to page 421 of McKay's Jurisprudence you will find, after citing the law governing the introduction of Masonry into a territory of country within whose political bounds Freemasonry has never existed, in the shape of Lodges, and after Lodges have been established in such territory by one or more Grand Lodges, he states,

"But afterwards these subordinate Lodges may desire to organize a Grand Lodge and they are competent to do so under certain restrictions. In the first place it is essential that not less than three Lodges shall unite in forming a Grand Lodge, the necessity of three Lodges concurring is derived from the well known principle of the civil law that a college or corporate body must consist of three persons at least.

"The Grand Lodge thus formed by the Union of not less than three Lodges in convention, at once assumes all the prerogatives of a Grand Lodge and acquires exclusive Masonic jurisdiction over the territory within whose geographical limits it has been constituted. No Lodge can continue to exist or be subsequently established in the territory, except under its authority and all other Grand Lodges are precluded from exercising any Masonic authority within the said territory. These are all principles of Masonic law which seem to be admitted

And these principles apply equally .to the formation of Grand Chapters, and all Grand Chapters in existence today both in the United States and the Dominion of Canada were brought into being under that general law, for the different Grand Chapters holding jurisdiction over the Chapters locate;,: in the then, unorganized territory, do not appear to have required their consent as an initial movement, but on the contrary, have at once recognized the right of the Chapters, so situated, to erect their own Grand Chapter, and certain it is that the Grand Chapter of Canada (Ontario) recognized that right in 1870 when it accepted and adopted the following clear cut statement on the subject by the then Grand First Principal:

"Since our last Convocation the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia has been formally organized, and although I could not help thinking the action somewhat premature considering the small numbers of Chapters existing in that province, yet acting on my convictions that where there is a Grand Lodge, a Grand Chapter may of right follow, I had no hesitation about acknowledging the "Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia and wishing that body all success and prosperity." (This declaration was reaffirmed by the Grand Chapter of Canada at its Annual Convocation in 1871).

Therefore, Companions, the position of the Grand Chapter of Alberta whether viewed from the American or Canadian standpoint, is perfectly sound and entitled to your support, and I might here add that a large number of Grand Chapters admit the soundness of Alberta's case and have postponed, not refused, recognition, simply out of deference to the Grand Chapter of Canada who is thereby given an

opportunity of doing the correct and proper thing (recognition of the Grand Chapter of Alberta) at its next annual convocation.

In section 2 of the constitution of the Grand Chapter of Canada it is provided that the jurisdiction of the Grand Chapter of Canada extends over the Province of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and the North West Territories, and on this the Grand First Principal lays great stress,, as giving them absolute right to state how and when Grand Chapters in any one of these provinces will be organized. I repudiate this contention as being contrary to all Masonic law and practice, and I also state that in at least one of the Provinces mentioned the Grand Chapter of Canada does not now and never did hold jurisdiction over all the Chapters located in that Province, (British Columbia is a divided jurisdiction and should not according to the Grand Chapter of Canada theory have been included in the Constitution of the Grand Chapter of Canada.)

Previous to October 1905 the Grand Lodge of Manitoba held similar jurisdiction over the territory now known as the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and had a similar provision in their constitution, but that was done simply to make it legal for the Grand Master to reside in these districts, and perform the duties of his office, otherwise the Deputy Grand Master being resident in the province of Manitoba would have had to act as Grand Master. At any rate, the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, made no such claim of jurisdiction, as has the Grand Chapter of Canada, for in October 1905 the Grand Lodge of Alberta was organized without having asked permission of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, and when the Grand Master was advised of convention, he signified his willingness to be present, was present, and assisted the convention with his advice in" organizing the new Grand Lodge and then installed its first officers. I would here draw a contrast between the actions of the Most Worshipful W. G. Scott, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba in 1905 and the actions of the individual who was Grand First Principal of the Grand Chapter of Canada in 1914.

Let us for a few moments look into and consider the kind of information laid before the Grand Chapter of Canada through the annual addresses of their Grand First Principal, D. F. MacWatt. In his February, 1914, address he admits full knowledge of the trend of affairs in Alberta – which indicates that he received the notices calling the different conventions held.

He admits that Capitular Masonry in Alberta cannot be properly conducted from Ontario, with this we heartily agree as it confirms our contention that the organization of a Grand Chapter for Alberta is in the best interests of Capitular Masonry.

He likens the Royal Arch Masons of Alberta to an infant which cannot crawl—this is absurd and requires no comment.

He charges that the infant went behind his back in attempting to organize a Grand Chapter without consulting him implying underhand work. – I repudiate the insinuation. He was advised by notice the same as all others interested and admits having received same, therefore, if he had anything to say, he should have attended the meeting, which was his duty, or communicated therewith in writing. He did neither.

He charges that the movement is not in the best interests of Capitular Masonry. This does not accord with his admission mentioned above, that Capitular Masonry in Alberta cannot be properly conducted from Ontario.

He states that the movement was brought forth to enable ambitious Companions to attain high rank sooner than it is desirable, - thereby insinuating that the Masons behind the Grand Chapter of Alberta are a bunch of office seekers. The insinuation is most contemptible, the Royal Arch Masons who participated in the formation of the Grand Chapter of Alberta were sincere in their convictions as to the necessity, and were honourable and upright in their actions. They did nothing of which they are ashamed.

He complains that the meetings of a Grand Chapter in Alberta would be attended by a small number. This is laughable.

He further complains that this small number would elect a large array of officers to govern. What? To govern a body of honourable, upright Masons the equal, but not the superior, of which, may also be found elsewhere.

He states that a membership of 1,000 is too small to enable any Province to maintain a Grand Chapter. Would he explain how the following Grand Chapters are maintained?

Arizona, membership	713
Nevada, membership	489
New Brunswick, membership	821
New South, Wales, membership	700
Utah, membership	598
Victoria, membership	768
West, Australia, membership	384
Wyoming, membership	870

He sets forth that the cost of maintaining a Grand Chapter in the Province of Alberta would be \$3,000.00 or \$4,000.00 per year. This is a gross exaggeration and I would refer him to any of the Grand Chapters mentioned in the paragraph next above, or to any business man.

In his February 1915 address he again intimates that he was aware of the agitation for the formation of a Grand Chapter for Alberta and that same was consummated on May 29th 1914. He carefully avoids stating what action he took during the interval, February to June 1914, to ascertain the true trend of affairs in Alberta. He did nothing. Is this the kind of action expected of those put in high places? I believe a little fraternal intercourse with those favoring the Grand Chapter idea would have solved the situation.

He states that the first knowledge he had of any intention of certain Companions of Alberta to organize a Grand Chapter was the receipt of a telegram from Calgary dated May 29th 1914. In the face of the statements contained in his February 1914 address and the statement of the Grand Z and Scribe B of Alberta, that a copy of notice calling the convention, that met on May 29th 1914, was duly forwarded to him by mail, at the same time as copies of same were mailed to all others concerned, is it possible to accept his statement as correct?

Again on page 22 he purposes to quote from Dr. McKay, a recognized Masonic authority, to define what occupied territory is, as follows: —

"A state or kingdom where there is and Lodge organized and subordinate Lodges working under it, is said to be occupied territory and by the American and English law all other Grand Lodges are precluded from entering in and exercising jurisdiction.

"Further, the jurisdiction of a Grand Lodge extends over every Lodge within its territorial limits and over all places not already occupied by a Grand Lodge"

In thus only partially quoting Dr. McKay he does so with the evident intention of misleading those not acquainted with particulars, into the belief that the Grand Chapter of Canada was organized in and for the territory of country west of the Ottawa River; which is not a fact. The Grand Chapter of Canada was organized in and for the old Province of Canada, whose political limits included the portions of the Dominion of Canada now known as the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. In 1877 the Grand Chapter of Quebec was organized which trimmed the jurisdiction of the Grand Chapter of Canada down to its present limits, the Province of Ontario, within whose limits only, has the Grand Chapter of Canada exclusive jurisdiction, and anything done by that Grand Body, in the way of instituting chapters in the territory of country now containing the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, has been on sufferance. In 1869 that territory was taken into the Dominion of Canada and I would point out that the Province of Ontario is not quite the Dominion of Canada.

Now let me quote Dr. McKay in full as appears on page 387 of his encyclopedia:

"The jurisdiction of a Grand Lodge extends over every Lodge working within its territorial limits, and over all places not already occupied by a Grand Lodge. Territorial limits of the Grand Lodge are determined in general by the political boundaries of the country in which it is placed. Thus the territorial limits of the Grand Lodge of New York are circumscribed within the settled boundaries of that state, nor can its jurisdiction extend beyond these limits into any of the neighboring States. The Grand Lodge of New York could not, therefore, without an infringement of Masonic usage, grant a Warrant of Constitution to any Lodge located in any State where there is already a Grand Lodge. It

might however charter a Lodge in a territory where there is not in existence a Grand Lodge of that territory."

In reading the above, substitute the name of Canada for that of New York, and you have the case in point. Again I ask, was this partial quotation an accident on the part of the quoter, or was it premeditated?

To quote further from Dr. McKay, commencing on page 421 of his jurisprudence it reads:

"Let us suppose then that there is a territory of country within whose political bounds Freemasonry has never yet been introduced in an organized form. There may be, and indeed for the execution of the law which is about to be explained there must be an adequate number of Master Masons, but there is no Lodge. Now the first principle of • Masonic law to which attention is directed, in this condition of things, is that any territory into which Masonry has not been introduced in the organized form of Lodges, is ground common to all the Masonic authorities of the world; and therefore that it is competent for any Grand Lodge to grant a warrant of Constitution and establish a Lodge in such unoccupied territory, on the petition, of course, of a requisite number of Masons, and this right of granting warrants inures to every Grand Lodge in the world, and may be exercised by as many as choose to do so, as long as no Grand Lodge is organized in the territory. So that there may be ten or a dozen Lodges working at the same time in the same territory and each one of them deriving its legal existence from a different Grand Lodge. In such case neither of the Grand Lodges who have granted warrants acquires, by any such act, exclusive jurisdiction over the territory, which is still open for the admission of any other Grand Lodge with a similar power of granting warrants. The jurisdiction exercised in this condition of Masonry by the different Grand Lodges, is not over the territory but over the Lodge or Lodges which each of them has established."

All chapters in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta derived their charters from the Grand Chapter of Canada but that fact does not abrogate the law quoted above. In the Province of British Columbia all Chapters therein do not owe allegiance to the Grand Chapter of Canada, yet they, the Grand Chapter of Canada, had no hesitation about placing the name of that Province in Section 2 of their Constitution which is only another instance of assumed ownership by the Grand Chapter of Canada. .

He (the Grand Z of Canada) also recites, with the evident intention of drawing a parallel with the Alberta situation, a case which happened in Scotland where an attempt was made some years ago, to organize a second Grand Lodge, but the undertaking hopelessly failed and rightly so, because there existed, at that time, a Grand Lodge in and for Scotland. His point however is not well taken for a Grand Chapter in and for the Province of Alberta did not exist, previous to May 29th 1914. Hence the parallel falls to the ground.

Again on page 17 of February 1915 address commencing with the last paragraph he states, that if the leaders of the revolt adhered to the truth the vote (at organization convention) should have been "for four and five against," and he further states that his authority for the assertion is "Appendices 4 and 5." Upon referring to Appendix 4 which is signed by Comp. A. C. Kemmis, you will find it clearly stated therein that the motion was declared carried by 7 to 2. Appendix 5 is not worthy of consideration, same being unsigned by the author.

On page 21 he states: "The whole point is, can Masonic territory occupied as such by us for nearly 58 years and in the occupancy of which we have been recognized by all the Grand Chapters in the world for that period," etc., etc.

On page 24, summary 2, he states: "The Grand Chapter of Canada is, and was from the institution of the first Chapter in the Province, in Masonic occupation of the territory," etc., etc. It is a fact that the first Chapter located in Alberta was instituted in 1893, just twenty-two years ago. The two statements mentioned above are therefore out of harmony.

The inference taken from summary 2 mentioned above is that as the Grand Chapter of Canada established the first Chapter in Alberta, that fact gave them exclusive jurisdiction over the territory. That contention however is not supported by McKay's Jurisprudence quoted in this letter, nor is the Grand Chapter of Canada sincere in the contention, as is illustrated in the British Columbia case. The first Chapter located in that Province was instituted by the Grand Chapter of Scotland and that Chapter is at the present time of obedience to that Grand Body (Scotland); therefore according to their own theory the

Grand Chapter of Canada was precluded from establishing Chapters within the Province of British Columbia, as the territory belonged to the Grand Chapter of Scotland. But no, that did not suit the Grand Chapter of Canada, and they, being a law unto themselves, claimed that Province as belonging to Ontario, hence the name British Columbia appears in Section 2 of Grand Chapter of Canada Constitution.

He (the Grand Z) charges that the Chapters and Companions were each and severally pledged to maintain allegiance to the supreme body to whose authority they owed their Royal Arch existence; which is quite true and it *is* equally true, that we maintained our pledge until we legally transferred our allegiance to a lawfully constituted Grand Chapter in and for the Province in which we reside, as has been done, in such circumstances, by all Chapters and Companions since the organization of the first Grand Chapter and thus did the Chapters and Companions of old Canada (now Ontario) act when the Grand Chapter of Canada came into being.

A perusal of the February 1915 address might create in the mind of a stranger the impression that those who took an active part in forming the Grand Chapter of Alberta were a very bad lot, wire pulling tricksters, unscrupulous office seekers, thieves or possibly worse, and that they conducted themselves very badly in the organization convention. Permit me to say that they are all reputable citizens known personally to many of you, and some of them have been highly honored by the Grand Lodge of Alberta. Need I say more to successfully refute the aspersions?

It would also appear that free speech is denied within the Grand Chapter of Canada as is evidenced by the action taken against Klondike Chapter for having dared to express their opinion on the Alberta trouble. The big club was at once used on them and they were no doubt forced to submit, but it is not at all likely that it changed their opinion. Possibly this explains why not a single member present at February 1915 meeting of the Grand Chapter of Canada had the nerve to stand up in his place and question the advisability of accepting and acting upon anonymous statements.

Look over both the 1914 and 1915 addresses of the Grand Z of Canada; can you find the least evidence of fraternal feeling or a desire to concede or recognize the rights of others? No; but you will find much of that air of ownership so often assumed by usurpers.

I have not the time at present to deal further with this matter; sufficient, I believe, has been said to demonstrate that in organizing the Grand Chapter of Alberta, the Chapters and Companions participating, violated no law of the Fraternity; also to show the spirit in which the Grand Chapter of Canada has handled the situation, but those and other points, are being fully placed before the "Court" of Foreign Jurisdictions and the Companions supporting the Grand Chapter of Alberta have no reason so far to fear the final outcome.

After all said and done Companions the final decision as to whether or not Alberta is to have a Grand Chapter rests with the Royal Arch Masons resident within the Province. A united front would cause the Grand Chapter of Canada to withdraw at once, while a division encourages that Grand- Body to continue in exercising jurisdiction over certain Chapters located in the Province, notwithstanding the fact, that every act they now perform in this Province is an infringement of Masonic law and usage.

Fraternally submitted,

T.F. ENGLISH.